

**RFI-5-108**

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES**

**Pre-RFP Informational Session  
For  
Foster/Adoptive Care Recruitment and Retention Services  
And Mass Media/Advertising Campaign**

**April 5, 2005 9:00 am, EST to 12 noon, EST  
Indiana Government Center South  
Auditorium  
402 West Washington Street, First Floor  
Indianapolis, IN 46204**

- I. Introductions
- II. Discussion of Request for Proposal (RFP) process by Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA)
- III. Discussion of Minority and Women's Business Enterprise Requirements
- IV. Description of RFP

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) may be issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Foster/Adoptive recruitment and retention services as well as the development and implementation of a mass media marketing and advertising campaign to educate the public on the need for quality foster and adoptive families. The interlinking of recruitment, training, support and advertising is critical for the success of Indiana's foster and adoptive family recruitment and retention campaign. Potential respondents may be asked to submit a proposal bid on all components of the up and coming RFP or only those for which they are interested in providing services. Agencies may also collaborate with other providers in bidding on all or parts of this proposal. If multiple agencies are chosen to provide the below listed services, they will be expected to collaborate for the seamless provision of services.

- A. A respondent will be expected to develop and implement local office specific recruitment plans for foster and adoptive families in each local office with the State of Indiana. It is the goal of the DCS that the recruiter will not just bring families in the door but will support them throughout the licensing process. The chosen respondent will be able to use general, child-specific and targeted recruitment techniques. Proposals will be asked to specifically indicate how each of the areas outlined below will be addressed and how they will meet the department's goals.
  - 1. Based upon local benchmarks provided, the chosen contractor will develop local DCS office specific targeted recruitment campaigns to meet the needs outlined by each local office thus increasing the number and quality of foster and adoptive families that will meet the projected needs of each locality and the children in care. The respondent must develop a plan to measure local office satisfaction of the quality of homes recruited and to ensure that the recruited homes match the needs outlined in the benchmark data.

- a. Develop a network of family foster/adoptive care that is neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive and located primarily in the communities in which the children live.
    - b. Partner with a wide range of community organizations-beyond public and private agencies-in neighborhoods that are the source of high referral rates to work together toward creating an environment that supports families involved in the child welfare system and helping to build stronger neighborhoods and stronger families.
  2. The chosen respondent will implement child specific recruitment plans for children in the Indiana Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) Picture Book (currently titled Opening Hearts Changing Lives Picture Book) and other children referred. Sixty percent (60%) of referred children will have a placement within nine months. This may include finding relatives or close friends who can be a permanent home for a child they already know and care about or finding a family who meets the specific needs and interest of the identified child or sibling group. This will include working collaboratively with the family case manager (FCM), neighborhood, faith based and community groups, support and special interest groups and the Special Needs Adoption Program Specialist (SNAPS). For each child or sibling group individualized planning will be required. The respondent will work with families approved by the DCS throughout the licensing and placement process.
  3. Develop a foster/adoptive parent job description to clarify the roles and responsibilities of foster and adoptive families licensed by the state of Indiana and whose license is maintained by a local DCS office.
  4. All families enrolled in Foster Adoptive Kinship Care Training (FAKT) training will have monthly contact with the respondent (face to face or phone) to provide support, feedback and assistance throughout the licensing process.
  5. The respondent will develop a plan to provide financial incentives to currently licensed foster/adoptive families who refer families that subsequently complete the licensing process and demonstrate a good faith effort toward accepting placements of children in care.
  6. The respondent will involve civic and faith based organizations within the community to assist in recruiting foster and adoptive placements.
  7. The respondent will be familiar with and support best practice and policies of the DCS.
- B. Foster and Adoptive Family Retention. According to the National Foster Parent Association, as many as 60% of foster parents quit in the first twelve months, when the hard realities of being a foster parent set in. Studies find that the primary reason foster and adoptive parents drop out, however, is the lack of responsiveness, communication, and support from the foster care system. It is the goal of the Indiana Department of Child Services that 75% of the foster parents will be retained during the contract year. Local office specific numbers and demographic information on currently licensed foster/adoptive families will be provided to the chosen respondent. Proposals may be asked to specifically indicate how each of the areas outlined below will be addressed and how they will meet the department's goals.
1. The respondent will provide foster care support workers within each geographically specified area to provide support services to all licensed foster/adoptive families. These services can include but should not be limited to providing counseling services as needed after reunification of a child from a long term placement, a child fatality, investigation of a foster home due to allegations of abuse or neglect, abuse of biological children by foster children, dealing with behavioral challenges of children or other issues as identified.

2. The support worker will be available to meet all families at the orientation meetings and will have a minimum of monthly contact with potential families throughout the training and licensing process.
3. The respondent will establish and implement a foster/adoptive family satisfaction survey. For information to be considered valid and acceptable a statistically significant number of responses must be received. The respondent will develop and implement a plan with the assistance and support of the local DCS to address areas of discontent.
4. The respondent will activate and staff a foster/adoptive parent crisis and complaint line. The staff will be responsive to emergency situations for foster or adoptive parents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The respondent will offer transportation, crisis intervention and problem-solving resources for families in need. Respondent will also work with the regional IV-B coordinators and local offices to offer referrals for post-adoptive services. This line should also provide foster parents with a mechanism to give feedback on their experiences as foster parents and provide suggestions for improving how the system functions.
5. The respondent will conduct exit interviews on all families voluntarily withdrawing/closing their licensing to determine reasons families opt to discontinue fostering or adopting.
6. The respondent will coordinate and arrange monthly support group meetings within reasonable distance in a geographically specified area. These meetings will offer in-service training hours and babysitting service during the meetings.
7. The respondent will coordinate and implement a foster/adoptive family incentive and rewards systems. These will include but not be limited to foster parent of the month. The selected home will be featured in the monthly newsletter ect. Foster/adoptive families will be recognized in news releases, stories in newsletters ect. Thank you cards will be sent to foster/adoptive families on their birthdays, mother's day and fathers' day. Special events will be held for foster/adoptive families not limited to picnics, parties, barbecues and ice cream socials. Each family will receive a personal letter of appreciation over the signature of the director.
8. The respondent will set up links to community resources that will aid foster/adoptive families.
9. The respondent will set up resource banks in geographically specified areas which provide clothing, toys, books, bedding, transportation or other services.
10. The respondent will coordinate and implement a monthly foster parent newsletter which will be circulated in a geographically specified area.
11. The respondent will implement the Regional Foster Parent Enhancement committee on a monthly basis and as needed in the assigned geographical area as outlined in the DCS child welfare manual and Foster Care Handbook.
12. The respondent will update and distribute the Foster Care Handbook to every licensed foster and adoptive family in the State of Indiana and work with the State foster care consultant to simplify and update foster care rules/regulations.
13. The respondent will maintain monthly contact with foster and adoptive families licensed by the state of Indiana who do not have a current placement. Efforts will be made to include these families in respite and mentoring activities.
14. The contracted provide will develop and implement local office respite networks.
15. The respondent will develop and implement a mentor "buddy-system" to link new families with more experienced families who can share their expertise and experiences.
16. The respondent will annually conduct the foster care Individualized Training Needs Assessment tool with all licensed foster/adoptive parents and give

recommendations for needed in-service training for each local office or specified geographical area.

17. The respondent will pay the membership dues of all foster/adoption parents to the Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association and the foster care liability insurance
- C. From the initial phone call potential foster/adoptive parents make to inquire about helping a child, they need to feel welcome, respected, accepted and needed. The respondent will be the initial point of contact for foster/adoptive parent inquiries by taking calls from the state foster /adoption recruitment hotline. Proposals should specifically indicate how each of the areas outlined below will be addressed and how they will meet the department's goals.
1. Potential foster/adoptive parents calling the hotline will receive prompt personal service. During non-business hours a friendly phone answering machine may be used to gather information for return calls. All messages will be returned the next business day. Bi-lingual or translator services will be available for non-English speaking families.
  2. Potential foster/adoptive parents will receive accurate information on how to become licensed foster/adoptive parents through personal contact and through written materials that will be provided.
  3. All families who contact the recruitment hotline and express a desire and readiness to be licensed will be scheduled to attend a mandatory orientation meeting, coordinated, arranged and implemented by the respondent, within 30 days of the initial inquiry and enrolled in FAKT (this will need to be coordinated with the selected FAKT providers). All families in attendance at the orientation meeting will be given the DCS licensing packet and check sheet.
  4. Respondent will send reminder notices seven days prior to the beginning of training, send reminder notices if the family misses the first day of training and send "we miss you cards" to families who miss two days of training along with information on the next scheduled training class
  5. All participants enrolled in orientation will be referred to a foster care support worker (provided by the retention contract provider) within 24 hours of the intake call.
  6. All participants' names will be forwarded to the local office director and FAKT provider on a weekly basis.
  7. 100% of calls to the hotline will be tracked through a state approved database that is developed by the respondent. The database will track all state requirements
  8. 100% of families contacting the hotline will be mailed information packets within 24 hours or one business day.
  9. The respondent will develop a plan to evaluate customer satisfaction with hotline services including identification of areas the staff excelled and areas identified as needing improvement.
- D. Mass Media Marketing Campaign. . Proposals may be asked to specifically indicate how each of the areas outlined below will be addressed.
1. The respondent will publish and distribute the Opening Hearts Changing Lives Picture Book. This will include updated complimentary photographs, as approved by the SNAP worker of each featured child. The style and content must meet the approval of the DCS. The picture book will be mailed out monthly.
  2. The respondent will develop a mass media marketing campaign to inform and educate the public regarding the need for foster and adoptive homes. The campaign will reach mass audiences through media and public outreach programs. These include but are not limited to public events, public service announcements on

television and radio stations, billboards, foster care and adoption fairs, booths at county and state fairs or sporting events. These campaigns will target all economic levels and various cultures and be used to raise the DCS's public profile and broaden community awareness of the continuing need for foster an adoptive families.

3. The respondent will develop and produce for distribution the DCS information, recruitment, and licensing packets.
4. The respondent will develop and produce for distribution the DCS foster care and adoption specialty items that can be given away at fairs, conferences, ect. as advertising items.
5. The respondent will maintain a web-based picture book that will feature children seeking an adoptive home.
6. The respondent will develop and maintain a web-based recruitment and retention website that will allow the public access to pre-service and in-service training information, licensing forms and information pertaining to foster care and adoption in the State of Indiana.

Previous Solicitation: None

#### V. Question and Answer Session

#### VI. Adjournment

#### Additional Information IDOA PROCUREMENT LINKS AND NUMBERS

- A. [www.opportunityIndiana.IN.gov](http://www.opportunityIndiana.IN.gov)  
Link to the developing "one stop shop" for vendor registry with IDOA and Secretary of State, MWBE business loop up, etc.
- B. Secretary of State of Indiana  
Can be reached at (317) 232-6576 for registration assistance. [www.in.gov/sos](http://www.in.gov/sos)  
\*All companies that are a regular corporation, Sub Chapter S Corporation, Limited Liability Corporation, Limited Partnership or Not for Profit Corporation must meet the 45 day advance registration requirement.
- C. Indiana Economic Impact Form  
Online version available at [www.in.gov/idoa/proc](http://www.in.gov/idoa/proc) (drag down page to "Indiana Economic Impact" link)
- D. Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises  
[www.in.gov/idoa/minority](http://www.in.gov/idoa/minority) for more information [www.opportunityIndiana.IN.gov](http://www.opportunityIndiana.IN.gov) for table of IDOA certified MBEs and WBEs.
- E. RFP posting and updates  
Go to [www.in.gov/idoa/proc](http://www.in.gov/idoa/proc) (select "current Solicitation Opportunities" link) Drag through table until you find desired RFP/RFI number on left-hand side and click the link.
- F. Information Technology (IT) Standards and Policies  
Go to [www.in.gov/itoc](http://www.in.gov/itoc) (select Architecture and then click on Standards and then on Policies)